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*The Desireableness of Peace, and the Duty
of a Nation upon the Recovery of it.*

A
S E R M O N

Preached before the
UNIVERSITY of OXFORD,
At St. MART's,
On Tuesday, April 25. 1749.

Being the Day appointed to be kept as a GE-
NERAL THANKSGIVING to Almighty
GOD for the PEACE.

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and the Heads of Houses.

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NAHUM I. 15.

Behold upon the Mountains the Feet of him that bringeth good Tidings, that publisheth Peace : O Judah, keep thy solemn Feasts, perform Thy Vows —

THIS Day is appointed, by our Superiours, to be kept as a Day of public Thanksgiving to Almighty GOD for His Goodness in restoring Peace to these Kingdoms, after He had for nine Years visited them with an expensive and bloody War. In humble Obedience therefore to Authority, and, We trust, with Hearts full of religious Gratitude, are now *the many Thousands* of the People assembled, to offer up their united Tribute of Thanks and Praise to Heaven for this invaluable Blessing. And, as this is the most noble and disinterested Act of Worship that can be addressed to our Creator ; to consider a *whole People* as engaged therein, and breathing forth at the same Hour, from all Quarters, their thankful Acknowledgements to the Deity, hath something in it wonderfully pleasing to the Imagination, and suited to kindle in us the warmest Transports of religious Joy.

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The Words I have chosen on this solemn Occasion are applied by St. *Paul*^a, with some little Variation, to the first Preachers of Christianity, the Publishers of that *Gospel of Peace*; and surely with the utmost Propriety might They be said to *bring glad Tidings of good Things*. We need not, however, confine them to this particular and more eminent Application. In their immediate and literal Import they are generally understood as referring to the News of King *Sennacherib*'s Army being miraculously destroyed, when that mighty Monarch was upon the Point of marching it up to besiege *Jerusalem*, after having overrun all the neighbouring Kingdoms and *laid waste fenced Cities into ruinous Heaps*. And in this View We need not critically examine the precise Meaning of every Phrase in my Text, or enquire whether the *good Tidings* here mention'd relate to civil or spiritual Peace, to the Tranquillity of the Church or of the State. The Interests of Religion and Civil Government are in general so interwoven, and those of the Church and the State among ourselves so intimately united, that whatever Blessings affect the former, cannot but affect the latter: and as, if the one *suffer the other must suffer with it*; so, if the one be honoured the other *must rejoice with it*.

^a Rom. 10. 15;

The Words considered in this Light naturally suggest the two following Particulars, which may not unfitly employ our present Meditations; and in the Illustration whereof I shall have a View more particularly to the joyful Occasion of our present Assembling: Namely,

I. *First*, The Desireableness of Peace to a Nation engaged in War.

II. *Secondly*, The Duty of a Nation blessed with the Accomplishment of its Wishes in this Respect.

And *First*; Peace, if it brings no Advantage but itself, is in most Cases desirable to a Nation engaged in War, because at least it puts the Inhabitants into a State of Quiet and Rest, of Freedom *from Fear of the Enemy*. For which Reason it is ranked among the chief of those Blessings promised to the *Israelites* in Reward of their Obedience; *"I will give Peace in the Land, and ye shall lie down and none shall make you afraid.* To which we may join this still higher Advantage of Peace, and indeed its truest Glory, the Preservation of our Species; which humane Consideration ought always to have a Place in the Councils of Princes. But besides securing to us the Benefits of Life and Property unmolested, it

^a Lev. 26. 6.

enables us farther highly to cultivate and improve these Benefits. All the Professions of civil Life, that come under the Notion of Science, Trade, Agriculture and the like, are by Way of Eminence stiled the *Arts of Peace*, as found only capable of flourishing in this delightful Season. On which Account, the Condition We are now speaking of cannot fail of being peculiarly acceptable to a People, that must live by their honest Industry in these Arts; that have full Employment at Home for all their Hands; and can propose to themselves no Advantage by foreign Conquests. An undisturbed State of Affairs likewise yields the best Opportunities for setting on Foot any extraordinary Designs, whether of a religious or civil Nature, for the Honour, the Ornament, or the Advantage of a Nation. For which Cause, We find, the building the famous Temple of *Jerusalem* was taken out of the Hands of *David*, whose Reign had been filled with Wars, and reserved by the Appointment of God Himself for the peaceful Days of his Son *Solomon*. It was the same happy Circumstance too that gave this wise Prince an Opportunity of settling a national Commerce, and of carrying it, during the Course of a long and quiet Reign, to its highest Perfection. Not to mention that the more ordinary Advantages of a Nation,

Nation, those I mean of Government, Wealth, Soil, Climate and the like, will only be valuable in Proportion to the Tranquillity wherewith they are enjoyed. In short, *Peace* is to the State what *Health* is to the Body, which not only supplies Spirits and Vigour for uncommon Undertakings, but gives us a Relish for all the ordinary Blessings of Life, and is what alone can render us capable of tasting them with sincere Pleasure.

But the Desirableness of Peace will appear in a much stronger Light, if We oppose to it the Condition of War; which, next to a State of Slavery, is the most calamitous a People can be involved in. For, to consider it only in its mildest Effects: Into what infinite Disorder and Confusion is a Kingdom thrown by the bare Preparations for War; what sad Anxieties and Terrours attend the Prosecution of it; and how unavoidably does it all the while weaken and reduce the contending Parties; so that at last, as in some other Contests, generally speaking even the Victors themselves are almost ruined thereby? The Scene wou'd appear still worse, were We to take a View of its Operations in the Field, where such enraged Multitudes are drawn together, provided with all the Instruments and dreadful Engines of War, and endowed with the utmost Skill and Address in applying them to the Destruction of
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one another, that Study and daily Exercise could give them. What wild Waste must it make at such Times in the human Species? But I have little Inclination at present to display all the Calamities arising from these worse-than-brutal Encounters. This would only be exposing to View such Scenes of Horror and Cruelty, of Bloodshed and Death, as, I think, for the Honour of human Nature ought, if possible, for ever to be concealed.

Instead therefore of spending the Time in general Reflections of this Kind, let us turn our Thoughts more particularly to the War in which we ourselves have been lately engaged; and consider as well the Evils that might justly have been apprehended from it, had not a seasonable Stop been put thereto, as those We really suffered, whilst Divine Providence thought fit to exercise us with it.

And, in this View, Nothing deserves sooner or more seriously to be considered, than the fatal Effects to *our Religion*, with which a Continuation of the War might probably have been attended. It is indeed no agreeable Task to publish our own Dangers. But, at the same Time, it must not be denied that the Enemy, whom we have most Reason to fear, had made an uncommonly swift Progress in his Conquests of late Years :

Years: And though no doubt he was greatly weakened himself, yet considering the Reduction of his Enemies, and the large Resources he had always ready at Hand, he seemed but too well enabled to extend his Conquests, at least upon the Continent, as far as he should choose. Had his Blow therefore been pursued, it might have put him in a Capacity not only of giving us perpetual Annoyance, but within a while perhaps of invading and over-running our Country. And had Things proceeded thus far, there is little Room to hope that, in so general a Calamity, our excellent Church would have been spared. The many Obstructions She hath given to the Enemy's pernicious Schemes would, no doubt, have intitled her to the largest Share of his Rage. And to render her Fall the more deplorable, in *her* Ruin must have been involved that of the Protestant Interest in *Europe*. Peace therefore considered in this Light only, when the Probability of Success lay so much on the Side of the Enemy, must afford sincere Pleasure to every Man, who wishes well to the Reformed Religion in the several Countries where it prevails; but especially to the Members of that Church, which has ever been its principal Ornament and Support.

Nay even, whilst We have been guarding against these publick Dangers, I am afraid, our

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Church may have suffer'd no inconsiderable Loss by private Seducers. It is certain that Times of Confusion are best fitted for those who *lie in wait to deceive*, when the Minds of the Vulgar, fill'd with gloomy Apprehensions, are most liable to be impos'd on by legendary Tales, and the Care and Attention of the Government are turn'd another Way. What Advantage the Adversaries may have reaped from hence cannot certainly be determin'd. But We are oblig'd, in Justice to their Discernment and Activity, to suppose, they would hardly overlook or let slip such Opportunities. And, from the loud Complaints that have lately been made of the Growth of Popery, there is Reason to fear, they have proved but too successfully industrious in applying them to the Promotion of their dark Designs.

Nor in the mean while are the Interests of Christianity in general wholly unconcerned. For War, in cutting off all Communication between Christian Countries and those which are either destitute of the Gospel, or as yet only in part blessed with its Presence, must give a fore Check to the Progress of Divine Truth, and subject those to great Inconveniences, who cannot be provided with due Supplies for its Maintenance from among themselves. For which Reason this Evil is particularly to be lamented when it rages among the
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trading Powers of *Europe*; forasmuch as these have made it their pious Endeavour, to propagate Christian Knowledge in those Regions of Darkness, whither the Business of Commerce hath severally called them. To which We may add, that War is an Enemy to Religion as it subsists in Individuals, in that it lays a Foundation for lasting Animosities between Kingdoms, sours and contracts the Minds of their respective Inhabitants, diffuses a Spirit of Contempt and Hatred through the Members of neighbouring Communities, so that they can hardly mention one another but in Terms of Scurrility and Reproach. Which Want of universal Charity, how little soever considered, must certainly be accounted for. And lastly, when Armies take the Field, how apt are they to draw the Attention of all Men after them, to fill their Heads with idle Speculations, to supply Matter for much impertinent Discourse, as if the vain Contests of ambitious Men were all we had to regard, to the no small Neglect of infinitely more important Concerns?

But as Reflections of this Sort may seem perhaps too minute and refined to be enlarged upon, I shall proceed next to consider those more apparent and temporal Evils, to which the State We are speaking of exposes us. It is true the People of this Land are perhaps less acquainted

with these than most other Nations: The Country Providence hath allotted us being so happily situated by Nature, so well fortified by Art, and so protected by our naval Power, that it cannot easily become the Seat of War, so long as our Contests are only with foreign Enemies. We are therefore almost Strangers to those sudden Alarms, that general Consternation, those Scenes of Havock and Devastation, which usually usher in and attend the Progress of this fatal Evil. But then, alas! when Wars are abroad in the Earth, and We ourselves bear a principal Share in them, who knows how soon Almighty God may issue forth that dreadful Command, "*Sword, go thro' this Land?*" Little in such a Case would our boasted Situation and Strength avail us! And surely, whoever considered how nearly this fatal Calamity had lately approached us, what unaccountable Vicissitudes there are in War, and above all how little his Country deserved to be spared, could not at such Times but live under continual Apprehensions of this sore Visitation. |

However, though no Dangers of this kind had seemed immediately to threaten us, yet War had still Calamities enow in Store to make us truly desirous of being delivered from it. For let the Scene of Action lie where it will, the Performers in it must receive their Support from our own Country.

Country. Which Circumstance, under the most frugal Administration, will always create an Expence too heavy for the Subject to bear. And, besides exhausting a Nation of its present Riches, by the Influence it has on Commerce in subjecting it to greater Hazards, Incumbrances, Interruptions and the like, it may be considered as stopping up the very Channels by which fresh Supplies of Wealth should be convey'd. But this is an Effect of War perhaps the least worthy of our present Meditations: nor should I have mentioned it on this solemn Occasion, but that it leads the Way to some greater Evils.

Among which may be reckon'd those Murmurs and Discontents, which though incident, in some Degree, to a State in its most flourishing Condition, will always grow more loud and numerous in Proportion to the Decay of Wealth in a Community. For let Men be never so importunate in their Desires to have a Check put to the Progress of an ambitious Enemy, to have ancient Allies succoured, and the Honour of a Nation maintained, or any other just Motive of War complied with; yet how soon does this Eagerness abate, when they feel the Prosecution of these wholesome Ends to be attended with a necessary Expence to themselves? The immediate and private Evil soon over-balances the distant and only-public

public Good : They grow weary, fretful and uneasy under the Burthen ; and, if We may judge from the Example of former Times, would perhaps scarcely be kept in good Humour by a Train of the most glorious Victories. Discontents of this kind are in all States and at all Times dangerous ; But never more so than when they fall out among a People, whose Character with their Neighbours is that of being bold, prone to Sedition, and delighted with Change : And at a Juncture too when some powerful Enemy lies in the Neighbourhood, ready to take Advantage of their Distractions, in order to impose upon them a new Government, or else to reduce them into a Province to himself. When Affairs are in this Situation, War can scarce be too soon put an End to, nor Time given to heal the Wounds it has either made or at least unhappily inflamed.

Again ; as Riches decrease, those worst Diseases of a State, Venality and Corruption, will be in Danger of growing more strong and epidemical. For though there are few Things Men dread so much as Poverty, yet as little can they endure the Thoughts of preventing its Approach, by abating any Thing of that Splendor and Luxury they have hitherto been accustomed to live in. What a ready Compliance therefore must Temptations meet with, which promise a temporary
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Removal at least of both these Evils? Would to GOD this was Matter of Speculation only! For surely no Man can take Pleasure in having *ought to accuse his Nation of*. But alas! are not these Reflections too, too well supported by Facts? We are indeed, it must be confessed, a People most miserably sunk in Corruption: And which is worse have, I fear, every Day fewer and fewer religious Principles left to recover us out of it. How far our Wars may have been the accidental Cause of inhancing this Evil, cannot be determined. But there is Reason to think it never became so flagrant and notorious on all Sides, as it has done since the Reductions in Point of our Wealth, which these have occasioned. And should Peace, with that Plenty which usually attends it, prove a Means, under Providence, of extinguishing in us all corrupt and selfish Views, of restoring us to a sound and healthy State, of reviving in us that generous and disinterested Love of our Country, for which We were once so famous; it would be a Circumstance of as great Joy as any the present Solemnity affords. /

But as Reflections of this kind chiefly respect those who continue in Quietness at Home, let us extend our Prospect into the Field, and view the Situation from which our brave Fellow-subjects
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are now delivered: A Situation, in which not only all endured Hardships, but all hazarded, and many Thousands lost, their Lives. Some Sentiments of Humanity could not but be moved in us even by the Sufferings of *Enemies* on these Occasions. How deeply then must We have been affected for those, who bore the endearing Title of *Countrymen*, and perish'd in our Defence in a foreign Land, *to return no more, nor see their native Country?* Most of whom, no doubt, left behind them near Relations or Friends to bewail their untimely Fall, and aggravate with their Out-cries and Tears the general Calamity.

And yet, the most affecting Consideration of all is still behind: I mean, the unprepared Condition to appear before their Maker, in which We may apprehend Multitudes are cut off by the Fate of War. Far be it from us to make any uncharitable Reflections on Men to whom We stand so greatly obliged. Nay We are willing to believe there must be many noble Examples of Virtue among Persons exposed to so many Dangers, and who least of all can call Life their own. But however, the known Morals and Religion of Soldiers in general are such, and, as some have remarked, more particularly of *English* Soldiers, as give us but too just Reason to fear, that Numbers of them are plunged into Eternity with such
a Load

a Load of Sin and Guilt upon their Heads as is dreadful to the Imagination to conceive. A Reflection, surely, but little attended to by those *that delight in War!*

Nor should we forget the many maimed and deplorable Objects, wherewith War replenishes our Streets; who are doomed to languish under a Life of Poverty, Nakedness and Pain; and appear such wretched Outcasts of Society, that, so far as earthly Felicity is concerned, they had better have perish'd in the Field. And with Regard to those who escape these Evils, the many vicious Habits, they too generally find they have been contracting, leave them but little Room to boast of their Acquisitions in the Camp. I mention this with sensible Concern for the *Public* as well as *themselves*: Not so much with a view to Persons of superior Rank among them; tho' too many of these are rendered no very desirable Members of Society, who might have been bred up to useful Employments in Church and State, had not the Times invited them forth to the Profession of Arms. But the Persons principally intended here are of ordinary Degree: Men, who are too far gone in Idleness and Debauchery to think of procuring a Livelyhood by their honest Industry; and who are above all others to be dreaded, if they betake themselves to

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contrary Courses, as they are become more audacious and cruel by being inured to Dangers, and as it were trained up in Blood. The many horrid Acts of Violence and Murder We hear of being daily committed do, I fear, but too sufficiently manifest the Truth of this Observation. And as to those who are not arrived at this Pitch of Wickedness, yet the many Habits of Intemperance, Lewdness and Swearing, imported with them from the Camp, render them of dangerous Example to the People, and contribute not a little to that Inundation of Vice, which is always observed to flow in upon us after the Conclusion of a War. In short, the Army is so very indifferent a School for Morals, and sends forth such profligate Multitudes into the World, when the Business of War is ended, that Peace itself may, in this View, seem formidable to us.

This Consideration, however, is by no means mentioned in Abatement from the Desirableness of Peace. These are Evils that must have succeeded to a War whenever it should be concluded; and must have gained Strength and become more grievous in Proportion as that Conclusion had been longer delay'd. And tho' our full Enjoyment of this Blessing may by them for a while be protracted, yet it is to be hoped they will not last long: They are only to be considered as the
Tossings

Tossings of a Sea after a Tempest, which, however troublesome and dangerous at present, must subside by Degrees, when the Storm, which caused them, itself is laid.

Notwithstanding therefore any transient Disturbances of this Kind, we may be consider'd as already in the Possession of Peace, and accordingly may proceed to reflect

II. *Secondly*, On the Duty of a Nation blessed with the Accomplishment of its Wishes in this Respect.

This Duty, as We are informed by the Text, consists of two Branches, *Keeping our solemn Feasts*, and *Performing our Vows*.

Now as all joyous Solemnities went by the general Name of *Feasts*, only because Entertainments of this kind usually made a constituent Part of them; We need not confine the first Branch of our Duty to the strict Import of the Word by which it is expressed; but may extend the Notion of it to all those Rejoicings, Praises, and Thanksgivings, which were at any Time instituted in Remembrance of National Blessings. And in this Sense the pious Usage We are now speaking of is of great Antiquity: Human Nature having always been too honest and generous not to testify, by some outward Tokens of

Thankfulness to the Deity, those secret Transports of Joy and Gratitude, which are natural to the Mind of Man when any extraordinary Blessing is received. Thus ^a *Melchizedeck* going forth to meet *Abraham* in His Return from the *Slaughter of the five Kings* is supposed, from the Circumstances of *Bread and Wine*, to have provided a Feast for Him and his victorious Army. And afterwards express Mention is made of his preferring a solemn Thanksgiving *to the most high GOD, Possessor of Heaven and Earth*, for the Success vouchsafed to that great Patriarch against his Enemies: Which Solemnity is the more observable as it was used upon a Conclusion being put to the first War we have upon Record. Again, so remarkable was the *Blessing of Jehoshaphat* for the Stop put to his Enemies, who had threaten'd his Kingdom with a powerful Invasion, that it afterwards gave Name to the Place ^b where it was celebrated. And We read that the *Jews* made the Day of their Deliverance from the wicked Devices of *Haman*, ^c *a Day of Gladness, and Feasting, and a good Day, and of sending Portions one to another*. The Songs of *Moses, Deborah* and *David* are all Instances to the same Purpose, and shew how becoming and necessary it was judged, by holy Men

^a Gen. 14. 18.^b 2 Chron. 20. 26.^c Esth. 9. 19.

of old, to commemorate, in some public Manner, any signal Instances of Success or Deliverance.

And as to the ancient Heathens, Nothing was more common among them, than to express their well-meant Gratitude to the Gods on such Occasions, by general Remissions from Labour, by public Processions with Hymns and Songs, erecting of Trophies, offering of Sacrifices, Consecration of Spoils, with other Acts of Devotion too numerous to be here related. One however I cannot forbear mentioning on this Occasion; which was that of building a Temple, when they had been blessed with a Victory or Escape from the Enemy, in Honour of the Deity, to whose Patronage they ascribed such a Blessing. This pious Custom was more especially frequent among the *Romans*: And though they mistook the true Object of Worship therein, yet doubtless it was graciously considered by the supreme Being, and contributed more effectually to their Success in the Day of Battle, than a thousand triumphal Arches reared, at an immense Expence, for the idle Entertainment and Admiration of the Vulgar.

In like Manner too it is recorded of holy *David*, that He built an Altar, and intended afterwards to have erected a Temple, in the Place where that sore Plague ceased, to which He had submitted

submitted rather than to a devouring War. And surely such Examples could not be unworthy the Imitation of *Christian* Countries. Edifices of this Sort would be, not only the most *significant* and *lasting* Monuments of a Nation's Sense of the Divine Goodness, but the most *useful* too; especially in Parts, where the Inhabitants are not sufficiently provided with Places for the establish'd Worship of their Creator: A Want which may drive some of the more *serious* to seporate Congregations; and furnish the *indifferent* with, what they may think a plausible Excuse, for attending no kind of Worship at all.

But leaving Considerations of this kind to Persons, to whom they most properly belong, let it suffice just to have mentioned the Antiquity of these solemn Observances, and how generally they obtained, without prescribing any Thing, as to the outward Tokens or Memorials of Gratitude, that might not unfitly attend them. It will much better become us to inquire into those inward Qualifications of the Mind, and more private Duties, on which the due Celebration of the present Solemnity more essentially depends.

And here, our first Care should be to possess ourselves with a just Notion of GOD's directing Providence and Assistance in the Accomplishment of Peace. For though perhaps this Day's Solemnity

nity may suppose us duly sensible of this Point already, yet it is well known that pious Institutions may gain an outward Compliance from those, who pay little Regard to the Truths on which they are founded. I would not willingly indeed suppose this to be our present Case. But certain it is, that We are grown surprisingly sparing in our Acknowledgements of the Divine Interposition in human Affairs: Insomuch that were We to judge from some Histories, which have lately made their Appearance among us; or from our Conversation about the Success or Mis-carriage of public Undertakings; one would really imagine, that Providence had no longer a Share in the Government of the World, but that all Things were conducted, and brought to an Issue, by the sole Intervention of human Means. And yet there is not any Thing, as far as We can perceive, which the supreme Being hath shewn himself more careful to prevent, than such Incroachments on His Prerogative, or more studious to impress and maintain upon Men's Minds, than a lively Sense of the Dependency of all Events on His sovereign Will and Pleasure.

And as this seems to have been a principal Aim in all those Manifestations God hath given us of His Power, so more especially in the two great Articles now before us, of *War* and *Peace*.

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In other Instances, His Hand is chiefly displayed in keeping the several Parts of the Creation steady and uniform in their Obedience to the natural and stated Laws, which He hath ordained them. But it is not so with these; they are not tied down to the settled Laws of Proportion between Causes and Effects, but immediately depend on the Providence of GOD for their Guidance and Determination, *to whom there is no Restraint, to save by many or by few.* For which Reason He commonly styles Himself by some Title bearing Relation to these Provinces wherein He most visibly presides; as that of the *LORD of Hosts, the GOD of Battles, the MIGHTY ONE of Jacob.* And with Regard to the opposite Condition He is elsewhere said to *make and to give Peace:* And holy *David* with great Sublimity describes Him as the sole Restorer of this Blessing: *He maketh Wars to cease unto the End of the Earth: He breaketh the Bow, and cutteth the Spear in Sunder; He burneth the Chariot in the Fire.* — We are not however to consider Expressions of this kind, as excluding all subordinate Means from having a Share in our Acknowledgements. Great Thanks, no doubt, are justly due to our Gracious Sovereign, as well for his unwearied Endeavours to prosecute the War

^a See *Isai.* 45. 7. *Psal.* 147. 14.

^b *Psal.* 46. 9.

with

with Vigour, whilst it was necessary, as the affectionate Regard shewn for the Ease and Happiness of his People, in embracing the first Opportunity, to procure for them a just and honourable Peace. Nor are those who were employed under him, in the Prosecution of these Ends, to be neglected on this Occasion. But then We are not to rest here. We must consider the great *King of Kings* as the *first* Mover towards Peace: As He that allays the Rage of contending Powers; that in the Struggle weakens and reduces them by such just Degrees, as to render them mutually inclined to an Accommodation: As He that superintends, influences and directs their subsequent Proceedings, compounding the several jarring Interests of States and Kingdoms, and, by the secret Methods of his Providence, making them all contribute to the Promotion of His wise Designs.

Such Meditations as these, besides laying a just Foundation for Thankfulness, and directing it to its proper Object, will be attended with the farther Benefit of kindling in us that Joyfulness of Heart, so essential to the due Observance of the present Solemnity. For Peace, considered in this Light, is to a Nation like the Testimony of a good Conscience. It is a Token of our not being cast off by God, an Assurance that We still

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enjoy the Favour of His saving Care and Protection. Which Reflections, tho' at all Times full of Comfort, must be more especially so now, when *the Overflowings of Ungodliness* had made us afraid, and We were ready to look upon ourselves, as a People destined to Destruction. Nor is it the least Advantage of these Considerations, that they will help to regulate, as well as to excite, our Joy, and render it suitable to the Occasion; a chaste, becoming and religious Joy, unmixed with that Intemperance and Extravagance, which the Heathens considered, as inseparable from most of their festival Solemnities.

Having here mentioned Chearfulness as a Duty, We may farther observe, the Obligation We are under of stirring it up in others as well as ourselves. There are numberless unhappy Souls so depressed with Want, so totally sunk in Poverty, that, without our Relief, they must pine away in secret, whilst the Nation wears one common Face of Gladness. And yet, no doubt, their Rejoicings and Praises would be as acceptable an Offering to Heaven as our's. Can We then do a better Service, than that of lifting up their Heads at this Season, and enabling them by our Charity to partake with us in the general Joy? It is very affecting to consider the Humanity and Goodness, with which the Law of *Moses* is framed

med in this Respect. What tender Solitude has that great Lawgiver shewn, lest by their Poverty the Stranger, the Fatherless and the Widow should be excluded from having a Share in their National Rejoicings? And what repeated Commands has he given, that Something should be set apart for them, that they *might eat and be satisfied, and rejoice with their Brethren in all the Good that GOD had done unto Israel?* Such kind Offices as these, besides chearing the Hearts of the Indigent, would tend to sanctifie our other Performances on this Occasion, and be a Means of procuring them the most favourable Acceptance at *the Throne of Grace.*

Again; as this Day is set apart for religious Joy, it would ill become us to cloud it with Murmurs and Discontents. I mention this Point the rather, because there seems to be a strange Inclination in many Persons to undervalue every Thing that is done, to seek out for Matter of Complaint, to aggravate our Misfortunes; as if We took no Delight in the Welfare and Prosperity of our Country: Which is the most disagreeable Return for Favours, to our gracious Benefactor, that can possibly be made. He loves to see His Creatures happy under His Dispensations, and considers their chearful Enjoyment of them, as a kind of implicit Praise and Thanksgiving to

His Providence. We ought therefore, as at all Times, so more especially now, to turn the brighter Side of Things towards us; to view the Situation of public Affairs in the same Light, as a wise Man does his private Concerns; who reflects on the Good he possesses, and the Evils he hath escaped, rather than torments himself with thinking, what *possible* Advantages might have been obtained, or how far he hath come short of the Ends he proposed at first setting out. This is the only Way to render a Condition so full of Disappointments, as the present Life too generally is, tolerably easy and comfortable to us.

And in this View of Things, the Successes We have been blessed with at Sea will deserve our particular Remembrance, as best suited to awaken our Joy and Thankfulness on this Occasion. For here indeed the *British* Strength appeared to great Advantage, and proved abundantly an Over-match for all the combined Force our Enemies could send against it. Nay, so far did Providence vouchsafe to favour our Endeavours, that at last We became, as it were, sole Masters of the Deep, without an Enemy left in this wide Element that dared to encounter us. And yet many Things fell out in the Course of our Proceedings here, that might have rendered such an universal Dominion less expected; which it would be needless

less to specify, as they were Subjects at the Time of daily Complaint, and thought, more than once to have prevented Things from being brought to a speedy and favourable Issue. To obtain therefore such an intire Conquest, notwithstanding the Misfortunes hinted at, shews at once *wherein our great Strength lieth*, and how ready Almighty God is to second Men's Endeavours, when they apply their Force in the Way which He and Nature hath directed.

And if our Successes by Land, instead of corresponding to these, have fallen short of our Expectations, it is a Pleasure however to reflect, that the little Discomfitures We met with here, were not owing to our Countrymen, whose wonted Bravery distinguished itself on every Occasion; but rather, so far as human Means had a Share in them, to the Backwardness of Allies, the superior Numbers of the Enemy, their greater Facility of procuring still fresh Supplies, with other such like Causes, which need not to be particularly insisted on here.

And lastly, if upon the Whole We do not find ourselves so much advantaged, after a long War as our sanguine Hopes might flatter us at first; instead of throwing all the Blame upon our brave Countrymen, which would be unjust, or upon our Governours, which at least would be undutiful;

tiful; let us charge it (as We cannot err in doing) upon our many National Sins and Impieties, which, we have Reason to believe, have chiefly *withholden good Things from us*. — And if to these our Demerits be added the Consideration of our having been engaged, for several Years, with two of the most powerful States in *Europe*; singly, We may say, at Sea, whilst we were also the chief Confidence and Support of the confederate Powers by Land; methinks, rather than repine at the general Issue of Things, we should look upon it as a signal Instance of the Divine Mercy, that We did not sink under the Burden; but were able at last to treat with the Enemy on such equal Terms.

Indeed there is Reason to hope We are not insensible of this Favour. The Fears Men betray lest the State of Tranquillity we now enjoy should not prove lasting, lest the restless Enemy should only be gaining Time to strike a more decisive Blow, argue a tacit Approbation of the Peace, a secret Acquiescence in our present Condition. In order therefore to remove our Fears on this Head, and to procure Establishment and Perpetuity to the Blessing now restored, let us be mindful of the

Second Branch of Duty required on this occasion, the Performance of our Vows. — This Point, though

though of the last Importance, is what we are in most Danger of proving defective in. For when Instances of Divine Mercy are newly received, when they are yet fresh upon our Minds, and commemorated by us in numerous and joyful Assemblies, We can hardly fail of being sincere and fervent in our Acknowledgements of them. But, then how naturally will Men stop here, imagining the whole Debt of Gratitude discharged by the short and transitory Service of one Day? Whereas a *present Sense* of Divine Favours will little avail us, unless a *grateful Memory* of them be retained, and made Use of as a Motive to correct and reform our future Lives. Nay This is an End, to which we are under particular Covenant, as it were, to apply them. For do We not consider Peace as vouchsafed to us in Consequence of our repeated Fasts and Humiliations before God? Would We then see it continue intire and unshaken? We must religiously acquit ourselves of whatever Promises of a new Life, whatever Vows of Amendment, were made under His afflictive Providence. We shall then have Nothing to fear from the busy Projects of an ambitious Enemy. But on no other Grounds can We hope for a Continuation of the Blessing restored, but may rather look for a Visitation of sorer Calamities than We have hitherto experienced.

And

And having taken this effectual Method to secure the Possession of Peace, it will next behove us to cultivate those relative and social Duties among ourselves, which alone can render it a Blessing to us : Such I mean as that of Subjection to those whom Providence hath set over us, Peaceableness towards our Equals, Gentleness towards Inferiors, and in short Order and Harmony throughout the whole Body.

For in vain have we made Peace with the Enemy, if We continue to foment Heats and Animosities among ourselves. These may in the End prove as fatal to us as foreign Wars : And will in the mean while rob us of those blessed Fruits, which Peace is naturally fitted to produce. We must therefore unite our Endeavours to assuage that virulent Spirit of Party, which hath diffused itself thro' all Ranks and Degrees of Men ; to the utter Extinction almost of every Thing that is good and great amongst us. It is indeed with Reluctance that I enter on this Part of the Subject. For who can behold without Pain his native Country, though fitted by its Situation, by its natural Products, by its Government, its Religion and Laws, to be the happiest Kingdom on Earth, almost deprived of these Advantages through intestine Broils ? — Nor again can We hope to be more flourishing than We are happy, under such
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Circumstances. For alas! what generous Designs can be carried into Execution, when every Thing is considered with an Eye to Party, and therefore sure of being clogged with Oppositions? Nay, can so much as any public Spirit be expected, whilst Men's Views are confined to the narrow Limits of a Faction, and their Minds so imbibited, that they can hardly wish any general Good to the Community, lest their Enemies should be equal Sharers in it with themselves? How many Considerations are there which should incline us to lay aside these civil Diffensions? We are a Nation divided by Nature from all other Kingdoms, *a People that dwell alone*, and therefore, like a Family situated in a remote Place, are particularly bound to study the mutual Happiness of each other, by multiplying domestic Comforts, and cultivating Peace and Unanimity among ourselves. Again, a Nation's own Strength under Providence must ever be its best Security. For States however nearly allied, can generally bear one another's Distresses with wonderful Patience and Resignation: And, I think, Experience teaches us, that foreign Assistance would be administer'd but in a lame and ineffectual Manner, should our unhappy Divisions ever reduce us so low as to stand in Need of it. And as to professed Enemies, they desire Nothing more, than to see us discharging

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the Rage, due to themselves, so keenly upon one another; that, when Parties are sufficiently spent, like Vultures, they may fall on and devour their mangled Carcases. But above all let it be considered, how inconsistent this Conduct is with Charity, the Perfection and Ornament of our Religion, and without which the great and ultimate End of it can never be obtained.

How much better then would it be to employ our Zeal in mitigating the Fierceness of Contention, rather than inflaming it, in rectifying Prejudices, doing Justice to injured Characters, reconciling the Minds of Fellow-Subjects, and in restoring that Tranquillity to our Country which is so much to be desired? The Time will come, when such good Offices as these will yield us more Comfort in the Reflection, than what all the Applauses and little Triumphs of a Party can bestow.

But lastly, most of all does it behove learned Societies to study the *Things that make for Peace*. We may observe, and to the Honour of these ancient Seminaries be it spoken, that *Venality* and *Corruption*, after having made their Way into every Corner of the Land, have hitherto gained no Admission here. How highly then wou'd it redound to our Honour, could We shut out that other Plague and Reproach of our Country, of which I am speaking? We should then be, in a
still

still more eminent Degree, *the Salt of the Earth*, Examples of Wisdom as well as Integrity to the rest of the Nation. And with Regard to ourselves: the mutual Happiness and Improvement of Persons situated in these learned Retirements do, in a particular Manner, depend on the friendly Disposition they bear one towards another, and the hearty Confidence and Freedom of Conversation, subsisting amongst them. Whilst this our *Jerusalem* is thus *at Unity in itself*, We may go on with Cheerfulness in the Performance of our local Duties and in Discharge of the Trust reposed in us by our Country; enjoying all the Pleasure and Advantage which Communications with Men of improved Parts and Learning can yield. I need not say, how unhappily the Scene wou'd be changed if, instead of these, that accursed Fiend, the Spirit of Party, should ever be introduced amongst us, with all the Train of Suspicions, Jealousies and Hatred which usually attends her.

Nor is the Credit and Interest of the Place less concerned therein, than our own Felicity. For how natural is it to suppose, that Feuds and Animosities of this kind would occasion Reports being made little favourable to us? What Aggravations would there be of Things faulty, Perversions of what is good, and Misrepresentations of what is indifferent? This is not said to inflame
Matters,

Matters, but from a dutiful Regard to our common Mother, whose indulgent Care of all Her Sons merits their tenderest Concern for her Welfare and Reputation.

It may also deserve to be consider'd, what Inconveniences would accrue to the Public should We, by any Divisions of our's, bring into Disrepute these venerable Recesses, so excellently fitted, so conscientiously applied, to the training up the Youth of the Nation in every Thing virtuous, loyal and praise-worthy. How many would by this Means be withheld from enjoying the Opportunities of a liberal Education, and so the learned Professions be defrauded of their proper Supplies? How many driven to seek for Education in foreign Lands, where they can neither receive a Discipline so excellent in its kind, nor so proper for Men, who are afterwards to conform themselves to an *English* Constitution and Frame of Government? The Age too, alas! in general seems not so favourably disposed towards these Seats of Learning, as to admit of Dissensions among those, on whose Prudence and united Labours their Welfare and Prosperity must chiefly depend. And it would argue a kind of judicial Madness, when the Storms of Prejudice beat so heavily upon us, if, instead of saving the Vessel, We should fall to mutinying among ourselves.

But,

But, without dwelling on a Supposition so disagreeable, I shall conclude with the Words of the *Royal Psalmist*; in applying which, I doubt not, but every Lover of our Country will join with me:

O Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem! May they prosper that love Thee! Peace be within Thy Walls and Prosperity within Thy Palaces! For my Brethren and Companions Sakes I will now say, Peace be within Thee. Yea because of the House of the LORD our GOD I will seek Thy Good.

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But, without dwelling on a supposition
of the Holy Spirit, in saying which, I
do not, but every Lover of our Country will
join with me:

O pray for the Peace of Jerusalem! May they
be as the Peace of Jerusalem! Peace be within the Walls
and Prosperity within the Gates! For my Pea-
ce and Comfort shall I will not say, Peace
be within them. The strength of the House of the
LORD is GOD. I will not say the Lord.

P I W I S

